

RUTH

THE MOABITESS

R. K. CAMPBELL

*"Thy people shall be my people,
and Thy God my God" Ruth 1:16*


JUDAH

MOAB

MEDITATIONS ON THE
BOOK OF

RUTH

H. L. ROSSIER



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RUTH the Moabitess

and

Meditations on RUTH

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RUTH the Moabiteess

BY R. K. CAMPBELL

Meditations on RUTH

BY H. L. ROSSIER



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R. K. CAMPBELL and H. L. ROSSIER

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THANKING THE LORD

"Thus far the LORD has helped us" (1 Sam. 7:12).

We thank the Lord for His guidance and help in publishing this combined title with its cover design showing where Ruth traveled and what she said, easy-to-read page layout, maintaining in print *Ruth the Moabiteess** and adding *Meditations on the Book of Ruth*** by Rossier.

We thank the Lord for exercising individuals and assemblies to pray for this ministry, its Council and staff.

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This book is prayerfully committed to the Lord for His blessing.

For the Council and staff of
Believers Bookshelf, Inc. USA

André N. Hanna, MD

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PREFACE TO THIS BOOK

The significant characters in this book are indeed few!
They are, in order of appearance:

Elimelech – soon to die

Naomi – a prominent character

Mahlon & Chilion – two sons soon to die

Orpah – one wife who soon departs

Ruth – along with Naomi, the heroine of
the story, the object of God's grace.

Boaz – the hero of the story, the future
husband of Ruth, a type of Christ.

From this marriage came Obed who was the grandfather
of King David. So Ruth's name appears in the genealogy
of our Lord!

Yet the typeology for us today is amazing! Therefore,
we have combined two accounts: the longest from the
well-known modern writer, Raymond Campbell, who was
called to be with the Lord in 1995, and the second one
from the 20th century writer Henri L. Rossier.

We believe you will deeply enjoy and profit from these
short studies in modern English of this most unusual book
from God's Word!

Believers Bookshelf, USA

NOTES

RUTH
the
Moabiteess

BY R. K. CAMPBELL

NOTES

INTRODUCTION

In the book of Ruth we learn about the beautiful and interesting account of a Moabite widow who became the great grandmother of King David and has her name in the genealogy of the Lord Jesus Christ as given in Matthew 1:5. Her name is Ruth the Moabite whose husband, Chilion, an Israelite, died in Moab. Afterwards she became the wife of Boaz, a mighty man of wealth in Israel.

This instructive account of Ruth has its setting in the land of Moab which was east of the Dead Sea in Israel. It took place in the days when the Judges ruled in Israel, times that followed the days of Joshua. Ruth's Mother-in-law was Naomi, an Israelite of the tribe of Ephraim and from Bethlehem-Judah.

Her husband, Elimelech, came to Moab with his family and died there. The two sons, who married women of Moab—Orpah and Ruth—also died in Moab. So this divine account begins in chapter one with these three widow women, Naomi, Orpah and Ruth on their way to Bethlehem in the land of Judah.

After awhile Naomi asked her daughters-in-law to return to their mother's house and not go with her to Bethlehem. Then after some further entreaty and weeping, Orpah kissed her mother-in-law and returned to her people and to her gods (Ruth 1:7-14).

NOTES

Chapter 1

RUTH'S DECISION

But Ruth clung unto Naomi and said, "Intreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee, for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge; thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God; where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried: the Lord do so to me, and more also, if ought but death part thee and me. When she saw that she was steadfastly minded to go with her she left speaking unto her. So they two went until they came to Bethlehem" (Ruth 1:16-19).

Here we have the momentous, determined decision of Ruth expressed in noble and touching words. Though she was of a people that had their pagan gods, Ruth would not return to them as Orpah did. She firmly decided to go in a new way. Her words to Naomi indicated she chose a new path, a new place, a new people and a new Person, the true Jehovah God of Israel. She also had a steadfast purpose to go with Naomi to Bethlehem, the house of bread, in Judah which means "praise." She desired the house of bread and praise.

Shut out by law

First we would note that Ruth, not being a Jew, is a picture of how a sinner, whom the law of commandments shut out from blessing, can come into wonderful favor and blessing by the grace of God. You see, as a Moabite the

law of Moses declared in Deuteronomy 23:3-4 that such a one was not to enter into the congregation of Jehovah, even to his tenth generation because the Moabites had refused to give bread and water to the company of Israel when they came out of Egypt and traveled to the promised land of Canaan.

But in Ruth we see how the grace of God can work in wonderful purpose of heart and bring one into a great place of blessing with the people of God and Jehovah God Himself, even though the law of commandments would shut that one out.

Five P's

Now let us consider the five beautiful P's of Ruth's decision, the *Path*, the *Place*, the *People*, the *Personal God* and her *Purpose of heart*.

- **First**, she said emphatically to Naomi, "Whither thou goest, I will go." This was choosing a new *path* in association with one who belonged to the one and only true God. We too must choose a path to walk in. Psalm one speaks of the way of the righteous and the way of the ungodly that shall perish (v.6). Psalm 119 talks of the way of God's statutes, the way of truth, the way of thy commandments and every evil way and every false way (vv.30,32-33,101,104).

The Lord Jesus spoke about the broad way that leads to destruction, which many travel on, and about the narrow way that leads to life, which few find (Mt.7:13-14). He urged that we enter in at the narrow gate and go the narrow way that leads to eternal life. Another time the Savior said,

"I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (Jn.14:6).

Reader, on what path or way are you traveling? Is it the way of the ungodly, the way of evil men, the broad way that leads to judgment and the lake of fire, which you have chosen? If so, we entreat you to take Jesus Christ as the way to heaven and get on the narrow way. Or if you are trusting in a false religion that is not according to what the whole Bible teaches, remember God warns that "there is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death" (Prov.16:25).

- **Second**, Ruth's choice was, "where thou lodgeth, I will lodge." This was a *place* which she chose. It was a place in association with the people of God. This reminds us of the words of the psalm by the sons of Korah who said, "I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness" (Ps.84:10).

The path and place which Ruth had chosen was the way to Bethlehem in Judah where Naomi was returning. The name of this place means "the house of bread." Bethlehem was the place where Jesus Christ, the true bread of life, was afterwards born. How good to choose this wonderful place of the house of bread where Jesus Christ is found as the satisfying bread of life.

- **Third**, Ruth said, "thy *people* shall be my people." She chose to be identified with the people of God, those who were of the seed of Abraham, the friend of God. He is spoken of as "the father of all them that believe" (Rom. 4:11). So the faith of Ruth chose to make the people of Israel, the offspring of father Abraham, her people.

Her faith was like that of Moses, the man of God, who chose “rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season” (Heb.11:25). Even though Naomi was, as it were, a “back-slider” under the hand of God in discipline and away from the land of Israel, Ruth saw that Naomi belonged to the people of Jehovah God and desired to be identified with them (Ruth 1:13; 20-21).

- **Fourth**, Ruth’s faith rose up beyond the path of God, the place and the people of God to the *Person* of the true God. She said, “Thy God” shall be “my God.” She chose a personal, living God instead of the gods of the Moabites that were but dead idols that could not hear, see or feel. Her faith was akin to that recorded of the Thessalonian believers in New Testament days who “turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God” (1 Th.1:9).

All this indicates the importance of a personal faith in a personal God which does not rest in mere outward things of a path, a place and a people. True faith reaches up beyond outward externals and lays hold on the living God Himself. Hebrews 11 tells us that “without faith it is impossible to please Him; for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him” (v.6). A person of faith sees the promises of God, is persuaded of them, embraces them and confesses that one is a stranger and pilgrim on earth as he seeks a heavenly country (vv.13-14) Such was the genuine faith of Ruth the Moabitess.

- **Fifth**, Ruth’s unmoveable *purpose of heart* was manifested in that Naomi saw “she was steadfastly minded to go with her.” Her decision was no mere passing emotion

that had no depth. It was genuine, a heart-felt conviction, a fixed determination.

Ruth's sister-in-law Orpah had lifted up her voice and wept and kissed her mother-in-law and then went back to her Moabite people and their gods. She was like some today who sometimes show emotion, even tears, and profess to accept Christ as Savior. But it is soon manifest that there is no depth or genuine conviction of sin, no true repentance and no work of God in the soul or conscience.

There is no steadfast-mindedness, no determination to go on in the Christian pathway. So they go back to their old ways and company of the ungodly. Such are like stony-ground hearers which the Lord spoke about in Matthew 13. They hear the word and with joy receive it, but when tribulation or persecution comes because of the Word of God they are offended and wither away because they have no depth or root in themselves (vv.5-7,20-21).

At Bethlehem

The narrative now tells us, "they two" (Naomi and Ruth) "went until they came to Bethlehem." And it was "the beginning of barley harvest" (Ruth 1:19-22). It is always the beginning of a harvest of blessing when a soul comes to God through Christ the Savior. Bethlehem, the house of bread, is enjoyed and the soul is fed with Christ the true bread from heaven.

We noted that Naomi and Ruth her daughter-in-law came from Moab to Bethlehem-Judah in the land of Israel. This was the place Ruth had chosen in her "steadfastly minded" purpose of heart (Ruth 1:16-22). Here she spent

the rest of her life which was so filled with wonderful blessings.

Bethlehem-Judah

As we pointed out, “Bethlehem” means “the house of bread,” and “Judah” means “praise.” So Bethlehem in Judah stands for “the house of bread and praise.” It was the city of David where the Lord Jesus Christ was born centuries later.

He is the bread of life, the Living Bread which came down from heaven and gives life to the world. This He proclaimed as is recorded in John 6:33-58. He also said, “He that cometh to me shall never hunger, and he that believeth on me shall never thirst” and “If any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever; and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.”

All this is what Bethlehem of old typifies. And being in Judah, the praise tribe, there is the thought of praise to God and joy to man through Jesus Christ of Bethlehem. This is what was announced at the birth of Jesus as Luke 2:9-14 tells us: “Glory to God in the highest, peace on earth and good will toward man.”

Naomi had heard in the land of Moab that Jehovah God had visited His people in Judah and was giving them bread. After her years of sorrow in Moab, she was moved by this good report to return to Bethlehem, and Ruth was determined to go with her. When they came to Bethlehem, all the city was stirred at their coming and it was the beginning of barley harvest. There is indeed a great

welcome and the beginning of a harvest of blessing when one comes to Christ Jesus the true "Bethlehem," the house of bread.



NOTES

Chapter 2

BOAZ THE KINSMAN

Moving on to chapter two, we find it opens with the introduction to us of a new character in this moving drama of the account of Ruth the Moabitess. We are introduced to a man who is to play a great part in the life of our Moabitess widow. The divine account informs us, “And Naomi had a kinsman of her husband’s, a mighty man of wealth, of the family of Elimelech; and his name was Boaz” (Ruth2:1).

There are three interesting and important items brought before us here about this new person:

- He is a kinsman of Naomi, a relative.
- He is a mighty man of wealth.
- His name is Boaz, which means “in him is strength.”

In this true narrative Boaz is a beautiful picture of our Lord Jesus Christ. He became Man that He might be our Kinsman-Redeemer. This, Hebrews 2:14-15 informs us, “Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is the devil; and deliver them.”

Secondly, Jesus Christ is truly the “mighty Man of wealth.” His riches are unsearchable and endure eternally as Ephesians 3:8 and 1 Peter 1:3-4 assure us.

Thirdly, He is truly our Boaz with its meaning of “in Him is strength.” All power is His in heaven and in earth as the One who has risen from the dead and is alive for evermore (Mt.28:18; Rèv.1:18). Jesus Christ is the One spoken of in Psalm 80:17: “Let Thy hand be upon the man of Thy right hand, upon the Son of Man whom Thou madest strong for Thyself.”

To the above about Boaz as a type of Jesus Christ, we could add what we will observe in our studies, that he is most kind, gracious, loving and considerate in his dealings with others. This wonderful characteristic is certainly true of our Lord Jesus and He excels all others in this.

Ruth a Gleaner

In the interesting divine account of the activity of Ruth at Bethlehem, we see her as a gleaner in the barley fields. We would call this her *pursuit*, which is a sixth “P” added to the five given in our previous study on chapter one. We read, “So Ruth the Moabitess said to Naomi, ‘Please let me go to the field, and glean heads of grain after him in whose sight I may find favor.’ And she said to her, ‘Go my daughter.’ Then she left and went and gleaned in the field after the reapers. And she happened to come to the part of the field belonging to Boaz, who was of the family of Elimelech” (Ruth 2:2-3, NKJV).

From this incident of Ruth we may learn how a believer can get in intimate touch with Christ and grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior as the apostle Peter exhorts (2 Pet.3:18). Ruth went out to work; she went out to the fields to glean grain. It was thus she

happened to come into Boaz's field and met him who dealt so kindly and generously with her.

Ruth's gleaning grain illustrates how a believer can and should go to the field of God's Word, the Bible, and gather precious truths of food for the soul which are scattered on every page. As one gleanis from the Word of God, contact is made with Jesus Christ who is the theme of all Scripture. Christian growth and blessing are the direct result of labor in the field of Holy Scripture.

Gleaning grain which is left after the reapers have harvested the fields is hard work. But "In all labor there is profit," Proverbs 14:23 assures us. And the Lord Jesus said, "Do not labor for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to everlasting life, which the Son of Man will give you" (Jn.6:27 NKJV).

The Grace of God

Ruth desired one in whose sight she would find grace or favor. She took a humble place as an unworthy gleaner. Afterwards when she was moved by the grace that Boaz had shown her, she fell on her face and said, "Why have I found grace in thine eyes that thou shouldest take knowledge of me, seeing I am a stranger," or "a foreigner" (Ruth 2:10). This is the ground on which God can and does love to bless all who come to Him.

We are saved by the grace of God, His unmerited kindness, and we have access "into this grace wherein we stand." It is to "the praise of the glory of His grace wherein He has taken us into favor in the Beloved." Then we learn

of “the riches of his grace, which he has caused to abound toward us.”

And in the ages to come God will show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus (Eph.1:6,8; 2:7-8; Rom.5:2). As we glean in the vast and rich field of the Holy Scriptures, we grow in grace and in the knowledge of “the God of all grace.”

This gracious loving kindness is seen in the first recorded activity of Boaz. Verse four tells us, “And, behold Boaz came from Bethlehem and said unto the reapers, The Lord be with you. And they answered him, The Lord bless thee.” What beautiful greetings between master and servants! Boaz was a good master. He greeted his servants kindly and they answered him with blessing.

In this, Boaz reflects something of the Lord Jesus Christ as the wonderful Master whose yoke is easy and His burden is light (Mt.11:30). Reader, is He your Master and do you glean in His field, the Bible? Satan is a hard master and his yoke of sin is heavy and bitter.

The Servant Over the Reapers

In verses five and six we read of “the servant that was set over the reapers” in Boaz’s field. This nameless servant is a type of the Holy Spirit who directs the reapers and gleaners in the Lord’s harvest fields. The book of Acts clearly shows that the Holy Spirit directed the movements and activities of the Lord’s servants in the early Church. (Acts 2:4; 4:8,31; 7:55; 8:26,29,39; 9:31; 11:28; 13:2,4; 16:6-10).

Ruth's Steadfastness

Boaz inquired of this servant as to whom this new young woman was and was told that she was the young Moabite woman who returned with Naomi from Moab and that she had continued from the morning on as a gleaner. This good report as to Ruth gives us another important feature about her. She continued steadfastly as a gleaner. Verse 17 records that "she gleaned in the field until even, and beat out that she had gleaned." She was diligent and steady in her pursuit of gleaning. So also must every child of God be, in searching the Scriptures, if one would progress in spiritual growth.

The apostle Paul exhorted young Timothy to give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine, to meditate upon these things and to continue in them (1 Tim.4:13-16). The Lord Jesus said, "If ye continue in My word, then are ye My disciples indeed" (Jn.8:31).

Boaz's Encouragement

Now we have Boaz addressing Ruth as "my daughter" in verse eight. How encouraging and comforting it must have been for Ruth the stranger to be addressed thus by this mighty man of wealth and master. "My daughter" speaks of loving relationship.

Likewise the Lord Jesus addresses those who come to Him in similar loving terms. To the trembling and fearful woman with a twelve year issue of blood, who touched His garment, He said, "Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole: go in peace" (Mk.5:33-34). To the disciples He

said, "Children, yet a little while I am with you." He also said to them, "I have called you friends" (Jn.13:33; 15:15).

A Gleaner

In the second chapter of the book of Ruth, we have seen Naomi and Ruth at Bethlehem in Judah and warmly welcomed in the beginning of the barley harvest. Soon Ruth went out to glean grain in the field after the reapers.

We should understand that Jehovah God had commanded His people Israel not to wholly reap the corners of their fields and not to gather the gleanings of their fields or vineyards, but to leave them for the poor and the stranger (Lev.19:9-10).

Provision for the poor

In this way God made provision for poor and needy ones which they could avail themselves of by labor. God did not direct that mere "handouts" be given, as is done today in relief work. The needy ones had to work for their sustenance. Instruction in the New Testament declares "that if any would not work, neither should he eat" (2 Th.3:10).

Ruth was energetic and gleaned in the field of Boaz, the mighty man of wealth, from morning until evening. He kindly urged her not to glean in another field, but to remain with his maidens. Boaz also told her, "When you are thirsty, go to the water jars and drink from what the servants draw" (vv.8-9).

Food for the soul

Ruth as a gleaner in the harvest fields illustrates important lessons for young Christians. Food for the soul is needed for growth and sustainment of divine life. The Bible is the field to glean from. The word of exhortation rightly is as Boaz told Ruth: "Go not to glean in another field" and "abide here fast by my maidens."

The Lord said, "Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life; and they are they which testify of Me" (Jn.5:39). We need to read the Bible and search the Scriptures to get food for our soul and not just to obtain intellectual knowledge.

Fellowship in Gleaning

In the field where Ruth gleaned there were maidens of Boaz with whom she was to keep company. This is fellowship and companionship. God would have us enjoy the company, spiritual help and encouragement of fellow gleaners in the Lord's vineyard. Our companions should be those who love the Lord and the Bible.

Water Jars for Thirst

There was also provision for thirst in the water jars which the servants or young men had filled with water they had drawn from wells. They would represent "gifts" which the Lord had given to the Church "for the perfecting of the saints ... with a view to the edifying of the body of Christ" (Eph.4:8-12, JND). Such gifts have drawn water out of the wells of salvation with joy as Isaiah 12:3 speaks of.

As Boaz encouraged Ruth to go and drink from these filled water jars, so also followers of Christ are privileged to avail themselves of ministry, oral or written, which gifted servants of Christ have brought forth. We can reap the benefits of their labors. But there must be thirst and longings for the truths of God. The Lord Jesus said, "If any man thirst, let him come unto Me, and drink" (Jn.7:37).

If one only drinks of the waters which this world has to offer, there will be no satisfaction of heart and soul. The psalmist said, "He satisfieth the longing soul, and filleth the hungry soul with goodness" (Ps.107:9). As gleaners in the field of the true Boaz, our kinsman-Redeemer, Jesus, we should ever be thirsting for the living God in a dry and thirsty land where there is no water, as David expressed in Psalm 63:1.

Ruth's Response to Grace

The response of Ruth to all the kindness of Boaz and the gracious manner in which he dealt with her was that "she fell on her face, and bowed herself to the ground, and said unto him, why have I found grace in thine eyes, that thou shouldest take knowledge of me, seeing I am a stranger" (v.10). The wonderful grace of Boaz broke Ruth down entirely to the place of prostration before him. Grace humbles one to own personal unworthiness. It is the grace of God, His unmerited kindness, that brings salvation to guilty sinners.

Ruth owned that she was a stranger or a foreigner to Boaz and had no claim as a Moabite to any favors. The law of Moses said that a Moabite should not enter into the

congregation of the Lord even to the tenth generation. Though the stern law of God would shut out Ruth from blessing, the grace of God and the kindness of Boaz brought her into wondrous blessing. And Ruth greatly appreciated the grace that was shown to her.

We can and should thank God that, though the law given by Moses condemns us as sinners, the grace and truth that has come by Jesus Christ, saves all who trust that gracious Savior.

Boaz's Reply to Ruth

In verse 11 we have Boaz's reply to the humility and appreciative response of Ruth. He said that he had been fully informed about all that she had done for her mother-in-law since the death of her husband and how she had left her father and mother in her homeland to live with a people not known before. These words of Boaz illustrate how the Lord knows all about us and what we may have done for others. Perhaps people may not notice our service, or probably it is forgotten, but the Lord sees everything and forgets nothing. This is indeed encouraging.

Then Boaz went on to say to Ruth, "Jehovah recompense thy work, and let thy reward be full from Jehovah the God of Israel, under whose wings thou art come to take refuge" (ch.2:12, JND). With these encouraging and assuring words, Boaz blessed Ruth and recognized that her faith and trust was in Jehovah, the covenant God of Israel.

She had taken refuge under His wings and He would fully reward her work. This wonderful verse is of great comfort. May it be of great cheer and encouragement to all

our readers, especially to any who may be in trials and discouragements. David wrote, "Because Thou hast been my help, therefore in the shadow of Thy wings will I rejoice" (Ps.63:7). May this be the attitude of heart of every young and old believer in Jesus the Savior.

These gracious words of Boaz to Ruth now brought forth a further response of appreciation from her. "And she said, Let me find favor in thine eyes, my lord; for that thou hast comforted me, and for that thou hast spoken to the heart of thy handmaiden, though I be not like one of thy handmaidens" (ch.2:13, Numerical Bible).

She is emboldened to desire further favor in Boaz's eyes and confesses that he has comforted her and spoken to her heart. Our Lord Jesus ever delights to act in loving grace and speak comforting words to the heart of those who bow before Him in humility and accept His gracious favors. There are many instances of this in the Gospels.

Mealtime

Our interesting narrative goes on and informs us that Boaz said to Ruth, "At mealtime come thou hither, and eat of the bread, and dip thy morsel in the vinegar. And she sat beside the reapers: and he reached her parched corn, and she did eat, and was sufficed, and left" (ch.2:14). How important and necessary it is for children of God to have spiritual mealtimes when one sits down to read the Bible, either individually or with others, and get food for the soul in the Lord's presence.

Note the progress here. Ruth moves by invitation from an individual gleaner to sitting beside the reapers, who

represent ministers of Christ and His Word. Then she receives parched corn directly from Boaz. This is blessed communion with the Lord Himself. 4

Parched corn speaks of Christ as the glorified One at God's right hand in heaven. He has endured the fire of divine judgment for our sins at the cross. Ruth ate and was satisfied. She was asked to dip her bread in the wine-vinegar. This would speak of Christ whose love is more than wine (Song of Solomon 1:4).

In summary, we have seen Ruth as a gleaner in the fields of Boaz, the mighty man of wealth, in Bethlehem-Judah of Israel. He was very kind to Ruth, the Moabite stranger. He comforted her and spoke to her heart. She was invited to sit down with Boaz's reapers at mealtime and there he gave her parched corn and she ate and was satisfied and had some food left. In this account Boaz is a picture of the Lord Jesus Christ who graciously receives all who come to Him as needy sinners. He is the compassionate Master who tenderly cares for all who glean in His abundant field of the Holy Bible.

Handfuls of Purpose

As we continue on in Ruth 2, we read in verses 15 and 16 that when she rose to glean, Boaz commanded his servants, saying, "Let her glean even among the sheaves, and do not reproach her. And let grain from the bundles fall purposely for her; leave it that she may glean and do not rebuke her" (NKJV).

Here we see more of Boaz's loving heart of care for Ruth. He gave her the right to glean among the sheaves or

bundles where there would be many grains on the ground to pick up. Furthermore, he told his servants to purposely pull out for her some grain from the bundles which she could glean. They were to drop handfuls on purpose for her.

There is precious grain of spiritual food scattered all over the Bible for us to glean. But there are also places where there seems to be handfuls let fall on purpose for our special comfort and help in times of need. The Word of God is full of such handfuls of grace left on purpose for the earnest seeker of truth. Sometimes we find a verse or two in the Bible that just seems to suit us so perfectly in certain circumstances. It is one of those handfuls purposely placed in the Scriptures for the special help and encouragement of gleaners in the Lord's field. The Spirit of God would ever make the Word of God good to our particular and personal needs. In this way we find handfuls purposely placed in the Bible for our gleaning.

Beating out the gleanings

In verse 17 we read, "So she gleaned in the field until even, and beat out that she had gleaned; and it was about an ephah of barley." Ruth worked hard all day. Gleaning means stooping down and picking up single grains. It is a humbling and tiring job. Likewise, Christian growth and usefulness comes only through hard work of gleaning in the Scriptures.

Thrashing the Grain

Another lesson we should learn from Ruth is that she "beat out what she had gleaned." The grain had to be

thrashed out. It had to be separated from the chaff and made ready for food. It is not enough to read the Word of God and to understand intellectually its meaning and application. It must be made practically our own and prepared for our food so it can be assimilated. This would be beating out or thrashing what we glean. Such action suggests much diligence and exercise of soul. It means considerable prayer and meditation. The apostle Paul exhorted Timothy: "Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all" (1 Tim.4:15). This would answer to the figure of beating out the grain.

No Straw

Ruth did not take home any of the straw. She beat out the grain and took home the winnowed barley. We need to beat out the ministry we hear and read, and leave the chaff, but take home to our souls the real food. There is no chaff in the Word of God, but we need to chew and digest the food if we would benefit in our souls therefrom.

Provision for Others

One who gleans food for their own soul in the Bible will have some food to give others. Therefore, the next thing Ruth did was take up the threshed grain of the day's glean- ing, go into the city and give to her mother-in- law, Naomi, what she had reserved after she was satisfied (v.18). One who gleans food for their own soul in the Bible, beats it out and is fed thereby, will have, like Ruth, some spiritual food to give to others. Ruth had threshed grain to bring forth and give. She brought home an ephah of barley.

According to Exodus 16:6,36, an omer of manna was food for one person for one day, and it was the tenth part of an ephah. So Ruth had enough food for ten people. This shows her diligence. The Lord said: "every scribe which is instructed unto the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old" (Matt. 13:52). First of all we must have a treasure of gathered food and truths of Scripture. They must be treasured up in our heart's affections and then we can bring them forth as refreshing and satisfying edification for other believers.

"Where hast thou gleaned today?"

Ruth's kindness and activity in giving of her winnowed barley to her mother-in-law brought forth the question, "Where hast thou gleaned today? and where wroughtest thou?" This is a good pertinent question to ask ourselves—where have we gleaned today? Where have we worked today? Have we as believers in the Savior gleaned today in His Book, the living Word of God, the Bible?

Have we worked therein today? Or have we spent all the day on material things and neglected to gather some spiritual food for the soul from the sacred Scriptures? Often times the day of Christians is fully taken up with the empty, frivolous things of this sinful world that follows after its god and prince, Satan.

Testimony of Manifest Fruit

The fruit that Ruth brought forth gave abundant testimony as to her occupation that day. Others will always

notice if one spends time gleaning in and searching the Bible and has personal communion with the Lord Jesus.

It is recorded in the book of Acts that when the religious leaders of the day saw the boldness of Peter and John and heard their testimony to Jesus Christ, they marveled at the utterances of these unlearned and ignorant men and “took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus” (Acts 4:13). The testimony they bore gave evidence of this.

The passage in 1 Timothy 4:15 we previously referred to about meditating on these things and giving oneself wholly to them, also states, “that thy profiting may appear to all.” If one gives himself diligently to occupation with the Word of God, his or her profiting therefrom will be manifest to all in wonderful testimony.

Boaz the Near Kinsman

Ruth now informed Naomi that the name of the man with whom she worked that day was Boaz (v.19). This drew forth an expression of gratitude to Jehovah God from Naomi. She said, “Blessed be he of Jehovah, who has not left off his kindness to the living and to the dead.” Previously when Naomi had returned to Bethlehem from Moab, she had expressed bitterness as to the dealing of Jehovah with her (ch.1:20-21). Now her heart is touched by the kindness of God to her family through Boaz. She then revealed to Ruth that “The man is near of kin to us, and one of those who have the right of our redemption” (ch.2:20, JND). This was good news indeed to Naomi and Ruth.

There was a kinsman redeemer in Boaz, the kind and gracious man of wealth who had shown such favors to

Ruth the stranger. She had come to know him in a personal way by the experiences of the day. Now she is told he is the one who has the right by the law to redeem them.

In our narrative of Naomi and Ruth we need to realize that they were in great difficulty and poverty. Naomi had previously declared that she had been brought back to Bethlehem empty. She was a childless widow in the depths of poverty. Pressed by need, it seems she was about to sell the family inheritance, a parcel of land which had belonged to her deceased husband, Elimelech, as Ruth 4:3 states. There was a provision in Israel that any of the family or their relatives could buy back the inheritance. (See Leviticus 25:23-28).

It would seem that Naomi, compelled by need to sell the family inheritance, hoped that one of her kinsmen would buy or redeem it. Boaz was one of the nearest kinsmen and she evidently looked on him as one likely to redeem it for her. This we shall see developed in the third and fourth chapter of the book of Ruth.

Mankind's Need of a Redeemer

Making a personal application of the lesson before us of the need of Naomi and Ruth for a kinsman redeemer, we would state that like them, every individual of Adam's race is in great spiritual poverty and need of soul before God. Through iniquities we have sold ourselves and become bondslaves of sin (Isa.52:3; 59:2).

We therefore need a redeemer who can pay the purchase price and set us free from the bondage of sin. Psalm 49:7-8 states that "None of them can by any means redeem his

brother, nor give to God a ransom for him—For the redemption of their souls is costly, And it shall cease forever” (NKJV).

Jesus Christ the Only Redeemer

There is only one Redeemer for mankind and that is the Lord Jesus Christ of whom Boaz is a beautiful type. He is a Kinsman Redeemer also, for “God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law” (Gal.4:4-5).

He partook of flesh and blood, that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage” (Heb.2:14-15). In Jesus Christ “we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins” (Col.1:14). Reader, have you been redeemed to God by faith in the divine Redeemer who gave His life as a payment for your sins?

In brief review we recall that in Ruth 1, a Moabite widow, definitely decided to go with her mother-in-law, Naomi, to Bethlehem-Judah, the house of bread, in the land of Israel. This typifies decision for Christ the bread of life.

In chapter two we saw Ruth at Bethlehem as a gleaner in the harvest fields of Boaz, the kinsman, mighty man of wealth who is a picture of the Redeemer, Jesus Christ. As a gleaner Ruth became acquainted with the kind and compassionate Boaz and came home to Naomi at the end of a day of gleaning with abundant provision for their sustenance.

The end of chapter two informs us that Ruth “kept fast by the maidens of Boaz to glean unto the end of the barley harvest and of the wheat harvest; and dwelt with her mother-in-law” (vs.23). This manifested Ruth’s persevering diligence and is a picture of how one who has chosen Christ as Savior should continue as a gleaner and searcher in the Bible for daily spiritual food. The barley harvest is followed by the richer wheat harvest.



Chapter 3

SEEKING REST

Now in chapter three, we have a different activity of Ruth which presents an important spiritual lesson. We read in verse one that Naomi said to Ruth, "My daughter, shall I not seek rest for thee, that it may be well with thee?" Then the last verse of this section records that Naomi advised Ruth, "Sit still, my daughter, until thou know how the matter will fall; for the man will not be in rest, until he have finished the thing this day" (v.18). The little word "rest" in both of these verses seems to characterize this whole chapter three. Here Ruth seeks rest at the feet of Boaz as we will learn in the reading of this portion of the book of Ruth.

If in chapter one we have typified decision for Christ, and in chapter two, feeding with Christ and gleaning in the Bible, then we will find in this chapter three, rest in Christ set forth. And in chapter four, we will see relationship to Christ pictured in Ruth and Boaz.

Naomi desired rest from toil for Ruth, so she advised her to go down to the threshing-floor where Boaz was winnowing barley at night and lay down at his feet (vv. 2-4). This action, which was perfectly proper in these Eastern, Oriental circumstances, indicated that Ruth recognized Boaz's right to redeem the inheritance and to have her as his wife. Naomi instructed Ruth to put in her rightful claim on Boaz since he was a near kinsman.

At Boaz's Feet

When Ruth did as she was instructed, Boaz discovered her at his feet at midnight. When he inquired of her who she was, she answered: "I am Ruth thine handmaid: spread thy skirt (literally, wing) over thy handmaid; for thou has the right of redemption" (v.9, JND). By this request Ruth indicated she was willing to become Boaz's wife. (See Ezekiel 16:8.) Boaz had won her affections and she took her place at his feet in submission and acceptance of his claims on her. She took the low place and there found acceptance with Boaz and soon came into highest bliss of rest and marriage union with him. All this is an illustration of God's way of rest and blessing for individuals today. True rest of conscience and of heart is found at the feet of the *Lord Jesus Christ, the kinsman-Redeemer*.

He desires rest for the sinner and calls out, "Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light" (Mt.11:28-30).

The Threshingfloor

This was where Boaz was winnowing barley and where Ruth lay at his feet. It is suggestive of the cross of Calvary where the Lord Jesus suffered the wrath of a holy and righteous God against sin. There He bore the judgment of God and suffered the just for the unjust that He might bring us to God.

We must accept God's judgment of sin executed on Jesus Christ as the sinner's substitute if we would have peace with God and rest of conscience. One must come to Jesus and bow at His feet as a guilty and unworthy sinner to receive the rest of heart He offers freely. We must be yoked up with Him and learn of Him in submission if we would enjoy rest of soul.

Winnowing

Boaz was winnowing barley. This is the work of separating the grain from the chaff. It takes place at night when the wind blows. The Lord wants to winnow us so that the chaff, which has no value for Him, may be removed. He wants to remove from our lives everything that is worldly and not in harmony with risen life in Christ. The believer in Jesus needs to surrender to the Lord on the threshingfloor, so that he can be winnowed and the chaff removed from his life.

Washed, Anointed, Clothed

Ruth was instructed by Naomi to wash, anoint herself and to put on raiment when she went down to the threshingfloor where Boaz was (v.3). These three things God does for every sinner that comes to Christ.

The apostle Paul wrote the Corinthians that they were washed, sanctified and justified in the name of the Lord Jesus (1 Cor.6:11). The believer is also anointed with the Holy Spirit and clothed with the garment of salvation. "Of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption" (1 Cor.1:30).

The Christian is also to wash himself daily with the “washing of water by the word” of God. This is the purpose of Christ’s intercession now in heaven for the Church (Eph.5:26). We are also exhorted to “walk in the Spirit” so that the sweet fragrance of Christ may be upon us and the fruit of the Spirit be manifest in our lives.

As those who have put off “the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts” and have “put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness,” we are exhorted to put on as our raiment, “a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience” (Eph.4:22-24; Col.3:9-10).

Boaz’s Response

In verses 10-15 of chapter three we have the response of Boaz to Ruth’s request that he spread his skirt or wing over her as the one who had the right of redemption. “He said, Blessed be thou of the Lord, my daughter: for thou hast showed more kindness in the latter end than at the beginning: inasmuch as thou followest not young men, whether poor or rich.

“And now, my daughter, fear not: I will do to thee all that thou requirest; for all the city of my people doth know that thou art a virtuous woman. And now it is true that I am thy near kinsman; howbeit there is a kinsman nearer than I. Tarry this night, and it shall be in the morning, that if he will perform unto thee the part of a kinsman, well; let him do the kinsman’s part: but if he will not do the part of a kinsman to thee, then will I do the part of a kinsman to thee, as the Lord liveth; lie down until the morning.”

Confiding Faith Rewarded

How gracious and encouraging was the response to the boldness and confiding faith of Ruth. The grace of God encourages the soul and inspires it to confiding trust in the Savior-Redeemer. And then the same grace rewards the very confidence it has drawn out. In Boaz we see this grace manifest. In chapter two he encouraged Ruth with loving considerate care.

Now Boaz is ready to satisfy all the longings and desires his grace awakened in her by drawing out her confidence to himself. He took Ruth into a personal relationship with himself when he called her “my daughter.” He as it were, adopted her as a true daughter of Israel, though she was not officially such, but a stranger from Moab. Then he acknowledged the faithfulness and virtues of Ruth and promised to do for her all that was required.

Private Heart Intimacy

This sacred meeting and heart conversation with Boaz and Ruth took place privately between these two. It was vastly different from the previous scene of the busy harvest field with its active workers of reapers, overseers, young men and maidens. It sets forth the intimacy of heart relationship between the believer and the Redeemer in this church age of grace. Boaz said, “Let it not be known that a woman came into the floor” (v.14). Ruth’s being there and her going away were both to be a secret.

So it is with the true Church, the espoused bride of Christ on the earth. The Bible speaks of the Church itself

and the rapture of the Church as mysteries, or secrets, as the word means (1 Cor.15:51-54; Eph.3:3-10). Likewise the apostle John wrote, "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the children of God; therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not" (1 Jn.3:1).

The world of the unregenerate, who have not personally trusted Christ as their Redeemer, do not know anything of the sweet heart-communion of the Church with Jesus Christ, nor do they look for the coming of the Lord as the Bridegroom for His redeemed bride.

Boaz the Giver

In the early morning Ruth rose up to return to Naomi in the city. But Boaz would not let her return empty. He measured out six measures of winnowed barley and put it on her cloak and laid it upon her (v.15). This was an abundant supply, for it was more than Ruth could lift by herself. Boaz was a gracious giver as is our God and our Redeemer, Jesus Christ. Romans 8:32 declares, "He that spared not his own son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?"

Chapter three closes with Ruth advised by Naomi to "sit still" with the confidence that the man Boaz "will not be in rest, until he have finished the thing this day" (v.18). In our next and concluding meditation on chapter four we will see the activity of Boaz as the kinsman-redeemer on behalf of Naomi and Ruth.

In the third chapter of the book of Ruth we noted Ruth, the stranger from Moab, at Bethlehem in Israel, asking

Boaz the kind kinsman to spread his protective wing over her as the one who had the right of redeeming the inheritance that Naomi, her mother-in-law, was about to sell in her poverty.

The law in Israel made this provision for the poor, which also obligated the kinsman redeemer to marry the widow that was left childless, as was the case with Ruth (Lev.25:23-28 and Dt.25:5-10). The kinsman redeemer thus had the double duty of redeeming the land and also marrying the wife of the dead relative.

Boaz graciously promised Ruth to do to her all that was required, but stated that there was a kinsman nearer than he. He said that if this kinsman would not do the part of a kinsman to her, then he would do so the next morning.

Chapter four opens with the account of Boaz's activity on behalf of Ruth at the gate of the city. The gate was the place where all cases were to be settled. Moses had ordered, "You shall appoint judges and officers in all your gates, which the Lord your God gives you, according to your tribes, and they shall judge the people with just judgment" (Dt.16:18, NKJV).



NOTES

Chapter 4

THE NEAREST KINSMAN

In chapter four we learn that Boaz went to the gate of the city and sat down and the nearest kinsman came along. So Boaz called to him and requested that he sit down with him. Then Boaz took ten men of the elders of the city and had them to also sit down with the nearest kinsman and himself. He then stated to the kinsman the whole case of Naomi, how she returned from Moab and was selling the allotment that was their brother Elimelech's.

Boaz advised the kinsman to buy the land before the inhabitants and before the elders of the people. He told him that there was none to redeem it besides himself, and that he, Boaz, was next in line. When the kinsman said he would redeem it, Boaz reminded him that, "What day thou buyest the field of the land of Naomi, thou must buy it also of Ruth the Moabitess, the wife of the dead, to raise up the name of the dead upon his inheritance." Thereupon the kinsman said, "I cannot redeem it for myself, lest I mar mine own inheritance: redeem thou my right to thyself; for I cannot redeem it" (vv.1-6).

Thus the ten men of the city were witnesses that the claims of the other nearest kinsman were ended. He could not redeem the inheritance and raise up the name of the dead nor give rest to poor, desolate, widowed Ruth. So he publicly surrendered the right of redemption to Boaz.

The Law Cannot Redeem

In this incident we have an important lesson illustrated. Who is it that has the first and fullest opportunity of saving and redeeming the poor, lost sinner? It is the law of Sinai with its ten commandments, suggested by the ten men of the city who were witnesses. The law of commandments was “ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator” and was “glorious” (Gal.3:19; 2 Cor.3:9-10). The Bible says that, “the law is holy and the commandments holy, and just and good” and that it is “spiritual” (Rom.7:12,14).

This nearest kinsman would redeem the land, but he could not redeem Ruth. So also most excellent and necessary are the ten commandments for God’s moral government in the world. But the law of commandments can only condemn the sinner which we all are.

The Bible says, “That what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law; that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world become guilty before God. Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight; for by the law is the knowledge of sin” (Rom.3:19-20).

This is plain enough. The law cannot redeem the sinner; it can only shut his mouth and pronounce him guilty before God. The law has to curse the sinner, “for it is written, cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them” (Gal.3:10). It cannot give life or pardon the guilty sinner.

Fullest Opportunity

For hundreds of years the law of commandments had the fullest opportunity to save mankind from their sins and redeem Israel to whom the law was given. But it could not do so. As the ten elders bore witness that for hundreds of years the law had the fullest opportunity to save mankind from their sins, but it could not. This other kinsman could not redeem the land and Ruth, the wife of the dead, so the ten commandments bear witness that on the principle of law keeping, no one can be saved from the judgment on sinners.

God's Word says, "Whosoever shall keep the whole law and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all" (Jas.2:10). Everyone has sinned in thought, word and deed and has broken the commandments of God. And the wages of sin is death, so the law is a ministration of death and condemnation as Romans 6:23 and 2 Corinthians 3:7 tell us.

The vivid lesson to learn here in the book of Ruth is that the near kinsman, type of the law of commandments, cannot redeem the poor and needy sinner or give to God a ransom for his soul. We trust all our readers have come to this realization and are not trusting in keeping the commandments of God as a ground of reaching heaven.

A Schoolmaster

"The law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ (or, "a tutor until Christ came"), that we might by justified by faith" (Gal.3:24). A schoolmaster has lessons to teach. The lesson that the law of Moses would teach us is that we

are guilty sinners and need Jesus Christ the Savior. He died for sinners that He might redeem us from the curse of the law, having been made a curse for us (Gal.3:13).

Boaz the Redeemer

After the nearest kinsman had declared he could not redeem the field at the hand of Naomi and Ruth, he said to Boaz, "Buy it for yourself," and took off his sandal according to the custom in Israel as to legalizing transactions.

Boaz then "said unto the elders, and unto all the people, Ye are witnesses this day, that I have bought all that was Elimelech's, and all that was Chilion's and Mahlon's, of the hand of Naomi. Moreover Ruth the Moabite, the wife of Mahlon, have I purchased to be my wife, to raise up the name of the dead upon his inheritance, that the name of the dead be not cut off from among his brethren" (vv.8-10).

Type of Christ

Ruth's cause was taken up by Boaz. He bought the land of the inheritance and purchased Ruth to be his wife and to raise up the name of the dead. Here we have a beautiful picture of what the Lord Jesus Christ, our kinsman Redeemer has done.

He did what the Law could not do and far more than even what Boaz did. He purchased the Church of God with His own blood as Acts 20:28 says. Yes, "Christ also loved the Church, and gave Himself for it ... that He might present it to Himself a glorious Church" (Eph.

5:25,27). He gave Himself into death to purchase His bride.

The Lord Jesus fulfilled the two parables which He taught about the kingdom of heaven as recorded in Matthew 13:44-46. There He said that “the kingdom of heaven is like unto a treasure hid in the field, the which when a man hath found, he hideth and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field.” Truly, Jesus Christ gave all that He had.

His very life, to purchase the field, which represents the world, to have the treasure in the field of His redeemed ones for Himself.

Jesus Christ further spoke in the next parable in Matthew 13 about the kingdom of God being “like unto a merchant man seeking goodly pearls: who when he had found one pearl of great price went and sold all that he had, and bought it.” The pearl of great price is a type of the true church in its oneness. To obtain it, the Lord truly sold or gave up all He had to buy this costly and beautiful pearl as His bride.

The apostle Paul reminded the Corinthian church that they were not their own because they were bought with a price (1 Cor.6:19-20). And the apostle Peter wrote that believers are not redeemed with silver and gold, “but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot” (1 Pet.1:18-19). Truly the work of redemption has been accomplished at the cross of Calvary when Jesus Christ “gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world” (Gal.1:4).

Relationship and Rest

After all the people that were in the gate and the elders blessed Ruth and Boaz, he took Ruth and she became his wife. What a day of gladness it was for the humble, virtuous Ruth! What a complete change it was for her. She was now brought into a wonderful relationship—made one with the loving and gracious mighty man of wealth.

Complete rest was now hers. She was no more the poor, widowed Moabiteess that had to glean all day in the field and beat out grain for sustenance. She was now the wife and companion of the kinsman redeemer, Boaz. The earnest, decided, diligent and devoted stranger from Moab was now richly blessed of God and brought into the kingly line in Israel.

There was fruit from this blessed union with Boaz. A son was born to them whom the women named “Obed.” He became the grandfather of David, the great king of Israel years later. Thus Ruth later became the great-grandmother of David, the man after God’s heart. And her name appears in the genealogy of Jesus Christ. What an honor and privilege!

Christ and the Church

All this beautiful marriage union and relationship of Boaz and Ruth is a foreshadowing of the blessed relationship of the redeemed believer to Jesus Christ. We are betrothed or engaged to one husband that we may be presented as a pure virgin to Christ (2 Cor. 11:2).

The marriage day is coming for those who have received Christ as their Savior and Redeemer. It is announced in Revelation 19:7-9 as that which will take place in heaven after the Rapture of the true Church to the Father's house. The proclamation is, "Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife hath made herself ready."

There are many other prophetic teachings as to the future of Israel which are illustrated in the book of Ruth. In this series we have confined ourselves to the practical and typical teachings in the Christian life, which Ruth the Moabiteess illustrates for us. May each reader be edified and encouraged by these meditations on Ruth.

R. K. Campbell

NOTES

Meditations
on the
Book of RUTH

BY HENRI L. ROSSIER

NOTES

INTRODUCTION

The events of the Book of Ruth take place during the sad conditions and circumstances characterizing the rule of the Judges. Yet there is nothing in common between this account's train of thought and that of the account preceding it. The Book of Judges describes the ruin of the people of Israel left to their own responsibility. This ruin was without remedy despite the tender care of divine mercy which sought to restore the people and often succeeded in partially restoring them. In contrast to the drought and barrenness of the ways of unfaithful man in the Book of Judges, the Book of Ruth is full of freshness.

Here we find the "waterbrooks ... springs, and ... deep waters" that Moses spoke of (Dt.8:7, JND). Ruth is as fresh as a morning sunrise. Everything in this book breathes grace and no discordant note disturbs its delightful harmony. It is like a green oasis in the desert amid Israel's somber history. When we meditate on this little book of four chapters, it becomes wonderful to our souls.

The scene has not changed, and yet we can say that heaven's feelings and affections have come down and made themselves at home on earth. It is difficult to understand that this country, the witness of so many wars, shameful deeds and abominable idolatries, was at the same time the theater of events whose lofty simplicity takes us back to the blessed times of the patriarchs.

Yet this can be explained. From the time of the fall two histories have been unfolding side by side: the history of man's responsibility and its consequences, and the history of God's counsels and promises along with the way in which He would carry them out in spite of all that is to the contrary. This is *grace*. Only grace is involved when it is a matter of divine counsels and promises, for man in responsibility cannot attain them, his guilt is unable to change them, a scene of ruin is incapable of fettering them, and God rebukes Satan when he attempts to oppose them (Zech.3:2).

In the measure in which evil spreads, the history of grace develops in ever-increasing proportion and with irresistible progress until it attains its appointed purpose. Grace begins in the heart of God and centers in the person of the Lord Jesus. Its final culmination is the radiant glory of the Second Man and the blessings we shall share with Him. This is why Ruth ends with the prophetic mention of Him who is the Root and Offspring of David, the glorious Redeemer promised to Israel.

If Ruth is a book of grace, it is necessarily also a book of faith. Grace and faith ever go hand in hand, for it is faith that lays hold of grace, and appropriates it and cleaves to the divine promises and to the people who are the subjects of these promises. It is faith that finds its delight in Him who is the bearer of the promises and their heir. Such is the marvelous character of the book we are about to consider.



Ruth 1

“And it came to pass in the days when the judges ruled, that there was a famine in the land” (v.1). These words indicate the specific circumstances of the scene. We are in the days of the judges in the land of Israel. But there is a *famine*, this is a period when God’s providential ways are operating in judgment on His people.

“And a certain man went from Bethlehem-Judah, to sojourn in the country of Moab, he, and his wife, and his two sons.” Bethlehem, the city which would become the Messiah’s earthly birthplace (Mic.5:2) and which would have the privilege of seeing the brightness of Israel’s long expected star at the moment of its first appearance, saw only man’s poverty and absolute destitution during the days of Naomi. The hand that had supported the people was now withdrawn and the people had nothing. This truth, thoroughly developed in the Book of Judges, is merely noted in the Book of Ruth, but with certain important facts added in verses 2 to 5.

During these days of ruin and under God’s disciplinary ways, Elimelech (whose characteristic name means “God the king”) leaves his country together with Naomi (whose name signifies “my pleasantness”) and his children. Under divine government they seek refuge among the Gentiles.

In the midst of this desolation Naomi is still, in spite of all, united with her husband and her children. Her name has not changed and she still bears it in spite of the ruin. But Elimelech, “God the king,” dies, and Naomi is left a

widow. Through their connection with the idolatrous nation of Moab her sons profane themselves and likewise die. To all appearances the stock of Elimelech is extinguished without hope of posterity and "My pleasantness," in mourning and henceforth barren, is plunged into bitterness.

"And she arose, she and her daughters-in-law, and returned from the fields of Moab; for she had heard in the fields of Moab how that *Jehovah had visited His people to give them bread*. Wherefore she went forth out of the place where she had been, and her two daughters-in-law with her; and they went on the way to return to the land of Judah" (vv.6-7).

On hearing the news that the Lord had shown grace to His people Naomi rose up and set out to return to her own land. Israel's condition had remained unchanged, but God had put an end to the days of providential judgment which had befallen the nation, and this poor widow, bowed down under the weight of affliction, could again hope for better days.

As we have said, *grace* is the first and dominant note of Ruth. All the blessings contained in this book depend on the fact that "Jehovah had visited his people to give them bread." The Old Testament uses this well-known expression to characterize the benefits that will be brought to Israel by the Messiah. "I will abundantly bless her provision; I will satisfy her needy ones with bread" (Ps. 132:15). Oh! if only the nation had so desired, these blessings would have been her portion permanently when Christ appeared in her midst, multiplying bread for 5,000 and for 4,000 men!

Naomi's daughters-in-law accompany her, moved by the thought of *returning with her to her people* (v.10). But this good intention is not enough, for nothing less than *faith* will do to enter into relationship with *grace*. The behavior of Orpah and of Ruth illustrates this principle. In appearance there is no difference at all between them. Both leave with Naomi and walk with her, thus demonstrating their attachment to her. Orpah's affection is real: she weeps at the mere thought of leaving her mother-in-law; and full of sympathy, sheds still more tears when she finally leaves her. Orpah, the Moabite, also loves Naomi's people: "*They* said to her, We will certainly return with thee to thy people."

It is possible to have an amiable character without having faith. Faith makes a gulf between these two women who are so similar in so many ways. Confronted with impossibilities, the natural heart draws back, whereas faith is nourished on impossibilities and so increases in strength.

Orpah gives up a path which has no outcome. What could Naomi offer her? She was ruined, stricken by God and filled with bitterness. Did she yet have sons in her womb to give as husbands to her daughters-in-law? Orpah kisses her mother-in-law and returns to her people *and to her gods* (v.15).

Here at last the secret of the natural heart is unveiled. The natural heart may attach itself to God's people without actually belonging to this people. A woman like Naomi surely is worthy of awakening sympathy, but that is not the sign of faith in operation. *In the first place* faith separates us from idols, causes us to give up *our gods* and turns us to the true God.

This was the Thessalonians' first step in the path of faith (1 Th.1:9). Orpah on the contrary turns away from Naomi and the God of Israel to return to her people and her gods. Confronted by this difficulty, she shows that she is unable to endure the test. She indeed weeps as she leaves, but she does leave, just like that charming young man who went away sad, unable to decide to separate himself from his possessions to follow a poor and despised Master.

Ruth's case is different. What precious faith she displays, full of certainty, resolution and decision! No objection can change her mind. How clearly faith sees its goal! She listens to Naomi's words but her decision has been made, for she knows only *one* path, which for her is the *necessary* path. What are nature's *impossibilities* before faith's *necessities*?

Ruth neither allows herself to be deterred by the prospect of not finding another husband, nor even by the Lord's hand stretched out against her mother-in-law. In the obstacles that mount up she sees only so many new reasons for clinging to her decision. Naomi is everything to Ruth, and Ruth *cleaves* to Naomi.

"Do not intreat me to leave thee, to return from following after thee; for whither thou goest I will go, and where thou lodgest I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God; where thou diest will I die, and there will I be buried. Jehovah do so to me, and more also, if aught but death part me and thee" (vv.16-17)! To accompany Naomi, to walk with her, live with her, and die with her who was the only possible link with God and His people for Ruth: this was the longing of this woman of faith.

But her thoughts go farther than simple association with Israel; she *identifies herself* with the people, whatever their state might be, to belong to the God of Israel, the true God who does not change: "Thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God." Having turned her back on Moab and its idols, she now belongs to a new cause with which she identifies, excluding every possibility of separation. Only death can break such bonds.

Here we see how God and faith meet, understand one another and unite together. How clearly this account leads us to understand that faith is the only means of bringing sinful man into relationship with God! Just as Ruth clung to Naomi, so faith clings to the Mediator, the object of God's counsels, who alone can give an assured relationship with the true God and an unshakable position before Him.

How precious and touching is the journey of these two afflicted women returning to Bethlehem! Naomi had gone out rich and full and she was returning poor and empty. Was there any desolation to be compared with hers? Deprived of her husband and her two sons, too old again to belong to a husband, with no human hope of an heir, Naomi was a true picture of Israel. For her, everything on the side of nature and the law was ended. Moreover, the hand of the LORD was stretched out against her and the Almighty Himself, who it seemed ought to have been the support of her faith, filled her with bitterness under the weight of His chastening.

She had exchanged her name "My pleasantness" for that of "Mara" (meaning "bitterness"), because Jehovah's hand had gone out against her and the Almighty had dealt

bitterly with her. Her companion Ruth, likewise a widow and without children (but who had never yet borne children), and who was moreover a foreigner, the daughter of a cursed people, had not known Israel's past blessings and had no right to their promises. So these two went together, the one fully recognizing her condition and the hand that was weighing down on her, and the other having no connection with God other than her faith and Naomi.

Their path is strewn with difficulties but they see a shining star guiding them. Grace has dawned: God had visited His people to give them bread. The two women return to Bethlehem at the beginning of the barley harvest, thus coming to the place of blessing at the very moment it is being dispensed. There they will find Boaz!

Readers who are even slightly familiar with prophecy cannot fail to see in this scene a picture of Israel's past history and of the Lord's ways toward them in the future. Although they have been driven among the heathen on account of their unfaithfulness, certain bonds still subsist between the people and God. Has not the LORD said through Ezekiel, "Although I have removed them far off among the nations, and although I have scattered them among the countries, yet will I be to them as a little sanctuary in the countries whither they are come" (Ezek.11:16).

But their Elimelech is dead, the only head of the family of Israel. Christ the Messiah has been cut off; and so the nation has become like a widow deprived of children and barren in the midst of the Gentiles. But when she acknowledges and accepts God's judgment on her and drinks this cup of bitterness in humiliation, then the dawn of a new

day will arise for this poor people. God's ancient Israel, in their ripe old age the object of God's ways in foreign lands, in its bitterness of soul sets out once again to find the blessings of grace.

With ancient Israel a new Israel rises up, a Lo-ammi who was "not His people," but who, springing as it were from Ruth, return as a poor remnant from the fields of Moab to become "the people of God." They are presented to us under the figure of a foreigner because on the basis of the law they have no right to the promises. But new principles, principles of grace and faith, bring them into relationship with the Lord. On this basis God will recognize them as His people and give them a place of high honor, associating them with the glory of David and of the Messiah. A refreshing fountain has sprung up out of fruitless ground: a fountain which, however, sprang up only at that moment when all human hope was lost. This fountain becomes a stream, a deep, wide river, the river of divine grace carrying Israel to the ocean of messianic and millennial blessings!



NOTES

Ruth 2

In chapter 1 we have seen the admirable expression of Ruth's faith. Indeed, it is admirable, for such is the character of all that comes from God. Did not Jesus Himself admire the centurion of Capernaum who through faith acknowledged his own unworthiness and the omnipotence of the Lord's word to heal his servant? Chapter 2 now shows us different characteristics of this faith and the blessings that grace brings to it.

Up to this point Ruth's faith was resting on the work of grace which God had done on behalf of His people, but her faith must have an object, a *personal* object, and it is impossible for her not to find it. Ruth does not yet know the mighty man spoken of in verse 1, but she hopes to meet him on the basis of grace.

Listen to her speak to Naomi: "Let me, I pray, go to the field and glean among the ears of corn *after him in whose sight I shall find favor*" (v.2). Surely this land of Israel where God had visited His people to give them bread would also have some ears of grain for her. Although she is poor and without rights she knows she can count on the Lord's resources.

Her path is *clear*, as faith's path ever is, but she does not choose her path of her own will. We often incline to consider the result of our own thoughts or the fruit of our natural hearts' desires as the path of faith, whereas faith never acts except in full dependence on the Word of God. Ruth consults Naomi and Naomi tells her: "Go, my daugh-

ter!" Certainly God will guide her in this path. His providential grace brings her into the field of Boaz.

Boaz, a member of the family of Elimelech who had died, takes his place, so to speak. Naomi has a protector in Israel: a wealthy and powerful head of her family. "In him is strength" to restore this poor, completely ruined house. He bears the name of one of Solomon's future temple's two pillars (1 Ki.7:21), erected by the king as witnesses of the establishment of his kingdom, the glorious period that would follow the afflictions of David's reign. Boaz comes from Bethlehem, calls out the blessing of the harvest to his servants (Ps.129:8), and immediately notices Ruth in the midst of the reapers. Just so, grace goes before faith.

When asked, the servant who is set over the workers bears witness to the Moabite woman. She came poor and humbly supplicating, he says, set to work immediately, and has allowed herself scant any rest. Just like this servant, so the Spirit of God today bears witness to the character and activity of our faith. "Remembering unceasingly your work of faith," the apostle writes to the Thessalonians. Faith takes pains and does not rest until it has gathered in the blessings that God scatters on her pathway.

What a touching beauty is in this first meeting of Boaz and Ruth! His words resound like heavenly music in the ears of the poor stranger. Will he reproach her for intruding? Who could think thus of him? No, "Hearest thou not, my daughter?" he says. In my very field, and not in another I desired you to be and desire you to remain. Let nothing induce you to leave it. He associates her with his maidens. She need not fear anyone; has he not given orders concerning her?

And just as Boaz's field offers her nourishment, so there she also finds what is needed to quench her thirst. How many are the favors here heaped on Ruth! But wait: this chapter has yet fresh gestures of grace in store for her and the following chapters others yet. They multiply and grow greater until they reach the bounds of eternity! What should Ruth say to all this? If faith is already admirable, how much more admirable is He who is faith's object.

What majesty united with deepest condescension, yes, with almost maternal tenderness are seen in him! He towers up like the pillar of brass in Solomon's temple, he stoops to the most minute and delicate attentions of love, a love that has nothing in common with human passion, a love full of holy, merciful majesty, raising up its beloved object to himself after having consented to stoop to her level. This is Boaz, this is our Jesus!

The understanding of the resources of grace does not come to us in a moment. These resources are ours according to the measure of our faith's activity. Bit by bit Christ opens to us the enjoyment of the infinite treasures of His heart.

The first thing Ruth does is to fall on her face and bow down to the ground. Should she not be thankful when Boaz expresses himself in this way? You who profess to know Christ have never truly believed if the words of His mouth have not bowed you down at His feet.

Oh, what dried up hearts and arid souls you have, you rationalists of our day who dare call yourselves Christians, but judge the word of our Lord instead of receiving it! You fools who proudly exalt yourselves in His presence and

sling out your criticisms and cutting remarks at Him, criticisms really more insulting than the blasphemous curses of uncouth soldiers. You ought to cast yourselves down, overwhelmed, at His feet! Go, get back, persevere in your pride until judgment reaches you. Boaz's fields and His promises and His person will never be yours!

In turn, Ruth speaks. "Why," she asks, "have I found favor in thine eyes, that thou shouldest regard me, seeing I am a foreigner?" I love this "why" that demonstrates the deep humility of this young woman: "I have no right," she says as it were, "to such favor." She is not concerned with herself except to confess her unworthiness, but how she appreciates him! "You took notice of me when I was nothing to you!"

The servant had given witness to the poor Moabite woman; now the master declares what he has found in her. She was not standing before him with her righteousness as Job once did before God. Her experiences had begun where Job's experiences ended, and he before whom she was bowing down takes it on himself to bring her character to light, for he knew everything. "It has fully been shown me, all that thou hast done to thy mother-in-law since the death of thy husband, and how thou hast left thy father and thy mother, and the land of thy nativity, and art come to a people that thou hast not known heretofore."

In Ruth Boaz sees the work of love, the fruit of faith. Her care for Naomi, a type of the afflicted, distressed people of God, had not escaped the master. Yes, this poor daughter of Moab was a true Israelite in whom there was no guile. Also as a true daughter of Abraham she had left

her land and her family and had made her way to a people unknown to her.

Boaz sets his seal of approval on such love and faith. Then he offers her a reward: "Jehovah recompense thy work, and let thy reward be full from Jehovah the God of Israel, under whose wings thou art come to take refuge!" The reward is not faith's object, but rather serves as its encouragement.

Ruth answers as Moses once did in Exodus 33:13. Boaz's praise does not puff her up. She is well aware that all is grace and she desires to find yet more grace. She recognizes his authority over her and declares herself to be his unworthy servant. Then he singles her out for honor by inviting her to his feast. Ruth sits at Boaz's table! What a mark of favor for this poor foreigner! "She ate and was sufficed, and reserved some." Isn't this scene similar to that of Jesus multiplying the loaves?

The *fellowship* that Ruth has just found at Boaz's table does not cause her to forget her task. On the contrary, she draws new strength from it for fresh activity with more abundant and more blessed results than ever before. To be effective, our work must flow from what we have received for ourselves and it will be all the richer in results the greater the measure in which we have personally enjoyed the Lord's presence.

A heart nourished and refreshed by Christ can never be selfish. Is it not written, "Out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water" (Jn.7:38)? Ruth thinks of Naomi, and when she returns she brings her the remainder of her meal and that which she had gleaned. Likewise, the believer

devotes the fruit of his labor to God's people and seeks their prosperity.

How few Christian there are who realize these things! What importance does the prosperity of Christ's Church have for those who prefer their own church or their own people and their own gods? God's poor, afflicted people do not appear to be worth caring for to these indifferent hearts.

They may perhaps insist on the work of the gospel before the world, but a heart that is in fellowship with the Lord does not sacrifice the one for the other. The apostle Paul was just as much a minister of the assembly as he was a minister of the gospel. He loved the Church which Christ in His love had purchased with His own blood. It was far from Paul to love a sect or a church of *his own* invention. He knew only Christ's Assembly, and he was jealous as to her with a jealousy which was of God, so that he might present her to the Lord as a chaste virgin.

Naomi's heart is full of gratitude toward the man who had shown regard for Ruth when he might have rejected her as a foreigner. What sweet conversation is this exchange between these two God-fearing women! Ruth speaks the charming name of Boaz, and Naomi responds by giving thanks to Him who had not left off His kindness toward the living and the dead.

What a touching character Naomi displays! Ruth shows more the initial enthusiasm of young faith, whereas Naomi reveals the experience of a faith matured in the school of testing. Young Christians, don't heedlessly pass over the experience of those who have known the Lord longer than you have!

Naomi helps her daughter-in-law to know him better: "The man is near of kin to us, one of those who have the right of our redemption." Experience always goes hand in hand with intelligence. Naomi is aware of what is proper in Israel; she knows the order that is to adorn God's house.

The counsels of Christian experience always *bind* souls to the family of God and to Christ, just as Naomi's counsels attach Ruth to those who surround Boaz. These counsels, however, also *separate* her from every other field (v.22). These other fields might well afford just as many ears to the gleaners, but they would lack the presence of the one to whom Ruth's heart was henceforth indissolubly bound as well as the peace and joy that he dispenses.

The experience of those who have grown old in the path of faith is precious, for such experience promotes a walk *in holiness* among the young! This voice of experience also will ever understand how best to give thanks, for it knows the grace and kindness of the Lord in the past as well as in the present. Ruth *cleaves* to Boaz and *dwells* with her mother-in-law.



NOTES

Ruth 3

Naomi, as we have said, presents us an example not only of experience, but also of *intelligence*. How fortunate for Ruth to find such a guide! Naomi commands, but her orders are not irksome, for they are the commandments of *love*. “My daughter, shall I not seek rest for thee, that it may be well with thee?” (v.1). That which she directs she does in view of her beloved Ruth’s well-being, but also because she knows the heart of Boaz: “Is not Boaz of our kindred?” Ruth, the woman of faith, obeys: “She did according to all that her mother-in-law had bidden her” (v.6).

May we obey in the same way. Obedience is easy to those who know that God loves them and desires only their rest and well-being, that Christ loves them and constantly bears them on His heart. But obedience becomes difficult when the soul aims to satisfy itself and to find happiness outside of Christ.

Boaz’s labor was approaching its end. After the grain had been harvested he must winnow it in the threshing floor and then he would gather it into his barns. His heart was merry; would he drive the poor Moabite girl away? Naomi is full of confidence and is able to indicate the pathway of blessing to Ruth. “Wash thyself therefore, and anoint thyself, and put thy raiment upon thee, and go down to the floor; make not thyself known to the man until he shall have done eating and drinking.

And it shall be, when he lies down, that thou shalt mark the place where he shall have lain down, and thou shalt go in, and uncover his feet, and lay thyself down; and he will show thee what thou shalt do" (vv.3-4).

Ruth must prepare herself for this encounter; she is to lie down at his feet and wait for his word. This will characterize also the poor remnant of Israel who will be found faithful at the moment when the Messiah will arise after their long night of waiting.

But, I would ask, should not this character be ours too, for even greater reason? We have heard the call telling us to wash ourselves, to anoint ourselves and to adorn ourselves for Him alone. Have we forgotten that voice? Where are we now? Have we gone into His threshing floor to spend the night or into the threshing floor of strangers? Have we answered like Ruth from the depths of our heart, "All that thou sayest will I do"? Yes, He desires that we should be worthy of Himself in a practical way, that lying down at His feet, acknowledging His rights over us, we should quietly, peacefully wait for His word throughout the night hours. Soon our Boaz will break His silence. Will it be to reproach us severely or to express His approval of our conduct?

In the middle of the night Boaz recognizes the woman who has placed herself under his protection and blesses her. The Book of Ruth, this tale of grace, is full of the blessings of the giver and of those who receive. Every heart rejoices from the moment that Boaz enters the scene. His presence stimulates praise and thanksgiving for around himself he sows the favors of grace. What infinite joy to be able to praise our Boaz! But is it not also a joy to

receive, as Ruth did, the testimony of his satisfaction with regard to us?

May we be eager for Christ's approval! It humbles us to think that we seek it so little. Men's praise inflates us, but His praise never does. He approves us for what His infinite grace sees in us, and He sees in us that which His grace has produced and which answers to His thoughts.

Boaz praises Ruth because she had shown "more kindness at the end than at the first." She had first exercised love toward her mother-in-law who represented the people of God to her, and now she was acting out of love for Boaz. She had not gone after young men, poor or rich; she had not sought companions according to her natural inclinations, but she had come to him whose rights she acknowledged. He reassures her and promises to grant her all her requests (v.11).

What encouragement for believers! We receive everything from His grace, but He also gives us according to the measure of our obedience and according to the measure of our devotion to Him. "Give, and it shall be given to you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over" (Lk.6:38)!

As soon as Ruth had known Boaz she did everything with him in view. Now, he is doing everything for her. He is not satisfied simply not to be indebted to us; He desires to give to the faithful in heart according to all their needs.

"All the gate of my people knows that thou art a woman of worth." Ruth unites in herself the qualities of which the apostle Peter speaks, which make one neither idle nor

unfruitful as regards the knowledge of the Lord. To her faith she adds virtue, and to virtue, knowledge; and to knowledge, temperance; and to temperance, endurance; and to endurance, godliness. To brotherly love she adds love and shows more kindness at the end than at the first (2 Pet.1:5-8).

And so she receives an abundant entrance into the kingdom. This faithfulness touches Boaz's heart: "All that thou sayest will I do to thee!" What an example for us! Let us be ambitious to receive an answer like this. The church of Philadelphia receives such an answer. She has kept Jesus' word, and like Ruth has walked in His patience and in practical holiness, and Jesus tells her, "I will do everything for you!"

The Lord will also bless the poor Jewish remnant in the end times according to the virtue, holiness and practical righteousness they will demonstrate in their ways. Today He blesses us in the same way: "Whatsoever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments, and practice the things which are pleasing in His sight" (1 Jn.3:22).

But there was an even nearer relative who had precedence over Boaz as to the right of redemption. Would he be willing, would he be able to avail himself of this right? We will come back to this. Meanwhile, Ruth has the privilege of continuing to lie down at Boaz's feet until morning. This will be the portion of the remnant and it is also ours.

As long as the night lasts we can rest at His feet. Isn't this a blessed place—at His feet, enjoying His approval as

to our walk, recipients and objects of His promises? Also we can be filled with the assurance that He has heard us and that all the toil of this miserable life will soon end, giving place to the public manifestation of our relationship with Him and to the possession of the glorious fruit of His work!

Now it is Boaz (v.14) who looks out for Ruth's reputation and vindicates the righteousness of the one whom he will make his companion. But before taking up her cause openly he fills her cloak with barley, secretly giving her the pledge of what he will do for her (v.15). He acts in the same way toward us. The dawn is about to break, but before we can see Him and "recognize Him" He has already given us the Holy Spirit of promise as the earnest or down payment of our future inheritance.

Richly laden, Ruth returns to her mother-in-law and tells her, not what she has done for Boaz, but "all that the man had done to her." Her heart is full of him but she needs her mother-in-law's exhortation to *patience*. She will not have long to wait, for he who has taken her cause in hand will not delay to make it triumph. "The man will not rest until he has completed the matter this day," says Naomi. Why? *Because he loves her*. This is the great and the unique reason for His work on our behalf.

And we, my brothers and sisters, do we speak like Naomi? Do we have this blessed consciousness of the love of Jesus for us? Do we wait for Him as the One who will not rest until he will have completed the matter today? This "*today*" stands for the daily expectation of our Lord. He wants to have us with Himself. Yet a little patience, for He who is coming will come and will not delay!

NOTES

Ruth 4

Naomi spoke the truth. Boaz would not rest until he completed the work that he in his kindness and energy had undertaken. He wanted the one he loved to find rest and that it might be well with her (ch.3:1), and he knew that this could only be possible when united with himself.

So it is with the Lord and us. His life on earth was a life of toil for our sakes, crowned by the unspeakable “travail of His soul” on the cross. Thus He has fulfilled His promise, “I will give you rest.” We already possess rest of conscience in the knowledge of His work and rest of heart in the knowledge of His adorable Person. But the Lord continues to work today to bring us into the future rest remaining for the people of God, satisfied love’s rest where all will correspond to the thoughts of His heart eternally.

Boaz was also determined to give rest to his well-beloved because she had toiled and suffered with the people of God. Likewise, the Holy Spirit tells us: “It is a righteous thing with God to render tribulation to those who trouble you, and to you that are troubled repose with us, at the revelation of the Lord Jesus from heaven” (2 Th.1:6-7). “God is not unrighteous to forget your work, and the love which ye have shown to His name, having ministered to the saints, and still ministering” (Heb.6:10).

This Book of Ruth speaks much of work and rest: of work and rest in service, the work and rest of faith and the work and rest of grace. The reapers work and rest; so does

the lord of the harvest; so does Ruth, the bride of his choosing. How peacefully she rests at Boaz's feet during the hours of the night! And how she rests afterwards while waiting for her redeemer's efforts to prepare for her the rest of which our chapter speaks!

According to the custom in Israel it was a question of raising up the name of the dead and of re-establishing his inheritance. This duty fell to the nearest relative. Now there was a man there who had closer rights than Boaz over Elimelech's inheritance. Boaz speaks to him in the presence of numerous witnesses.

Indeed, this man would like to have had the inheritance, but knowing that "the seed would not be his own" he does not consent to take Ruth to himself. Had he done so he would have impoverished himself and marred his own inheritance, for Ruth's children's possessions would not have returned to him nor to his family.

This close relative is a graphic type of the law. Indeed, like this man, the law which had prior rights over Israel demands; it takes but gives nothing. It would just no longer be the law if it could undertake the work of grace. Nevertheless, its weakness does not come from itself, but from those to whom it is addressed.

The law expects something from man, but man shows that he is incapable of pleasing God. It promises life on condition of obedience, but since man is a sinner and disobedient, the law can only condemn him. The law is a minister of death and cannot give life to the dead. Barren as it is, the law will never produce a posterity and cannot give birth to sons as divine progeny of the Messiah.

Grace alone can undertake such a task. Declaring man to be lost and expecting nothing of him, grace imposes no condition on him, makes no promise to him, but gives to him liberally, unceasingly and eternally. Grace begets through an incorruptible seed and communicates life; grace puts man into relationship with God, produces fruit in him that God can acknowledge, and introduces him into glory.

Thus the law declares that it is powerless in the presence of the "Second man" who comes after the law, that is, in the presence of our Boaz in whom is strength. *He* will resurrect His people Israel and "He shall see a seed," as Isaiah says, but only, as we know, after having "poured out His soul unto death" (Isa.53). In the meanwhile all the result of his work at the cross applies to us Christians. As for our souls, we are already raised together with Him; as for our bodies, we will soon be raised just as certainly as He has been. For us, Boaz is a type of the resurrected Christ.

The nearest relative removes his sandal; the law cedes its rights to Christ: rights that are acknowledged by the witnesses brought together for this very purpose. Boaz redeems the inheritance to possess Ruth, for he has more interest in this stranger's well-being than in all that belongs to her. Christ has done even more for the Church. He *surrendered* all that was His to purchase her. The poor remnant of Israel will also recognize this with joy when they shall see their Messiah, once rejected, return in glory.

The witnesses of this scene, *the people and the elders*, acclaim and bless mighty Boaz, for such kindness is worthy of all praise. The Holy Spirit places prophetic

words in their mouths. "Jehovah make the woman that cometh into thy house like Rachel and like Leah, which two did build the house of Israel!" (v.11).

The history of the people will begin once again, so to speak, with this poor Moabite. It will recommence on the basis of grace. Here it is not Leah but Rachel, the beloved wife, the wife of Jacob's free choice, the one for whom he had served so long, who comes first. In every respect and detail the Book of Ruth fixes our gaze on grace. "And acquire power in Ephratah, and make thyself a name in Bethlehem!"

These cities, the witnesses of grace, will also be the witnesses of Boaz's power: "And let thy house become like the house of Pherez, whom Tamar bore to Judah, of the seed which Jehovah shall give thee of this young woman!" May his seed, like Pharez, be established according to the election of grace!

"And *Jehovah gave* [Ruth] conception." In the presence of this heir whom grace has given, the *women* again take up the people's prophetic line of thought. To Naomi they say, "Blessed be Jehovah who hath not left thee this day without one that has the right of redemption!"

They transfer the right of redemption that Boaz had exercised to the head of his son, and thus foresee the future redemption to be accomplished by the man born of Ruth. In Him, they add, the old age of the people will find a nourisher, their weakness will find a restorer, and His name will be associated with that of Ruth—this poor remnant with her affections set on Naomi, the much afflicted people of God, to whom she is worth more than a perfect number of sons (v.15).

Naomi nurses Obed in her bosom; he comes forth, like the Messiah, from this barren people. Then the *neighbor women* also raise their prophetic praise: "There is a son born to Naomi!" The circle becomes more intimate and along with this comes an increasing measure of intelligence. The nearer one is to God's people, the more one appreciates Christ and His grace.

If one is content with the relationship of "the elders and all the people," one will not go beyond their level of spiritual intelligence. But the heart that is attached to the Church will have a more intimate and more personal knowledge of Christ. "There is a son born to Naomi!" Just so the Israel to come will rejoice before Him as in the joy of harvest and as when one divides the spoil, and they will say, "For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government shall be upon His shoulder; and His name is called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Father of Eternity, Prince of Peace" (Isa.9:6, JND).

"And they called his name Obed." Obed means, "he who serves." This is the Lord's title of glory before all His other marvelous titles. This *Servant* is the Root and Offspring of David, the bearer of royal grace. Do not all our hearts beat with joy when we call Him by this name? He the Counselor, the Mighty God, has served, is now serving and will remain a Servant for ever for the benefit of those whom He loves!

Our highest blessings are comprehended in this title of Servant. His devotion to God, His love for us, His entire work even to the sacrifice of His own life, His present grace which condescends to wash our feet, and His eternal service of love when one day we will be with

Him in the glory of the Father's house, denote our
Servant!

Henri Rossier
Believers Bookshelf, USA
2007 Edition

*As saved by faith,
Fruit of Thy victory,
When Thine own in glory,
Shall ever be with Thee,
There, in celestial courts,
Beneath the Father's gaze,
Thy love's eternal service
Is ours through endless days!*

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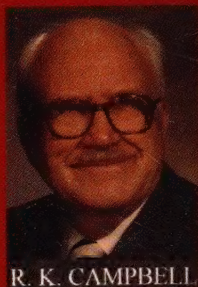




RUTH

In the book of Ruth we learn about the beautiful and interesting account of a Moabite widow who became the great grandmother of king David and has her name in the genealogy of the Lord Jesus Christ as given in Matthew 1:5.

Raymond K. Campbell, a well-known and respected teacher, often known by his initials, RKC, now with the Lord, wrote many books, but without question his most famous is *The Church of the Living God*, published by Believers Bookshelf



R. K. CAMPBELL

If the book of Ruth is a book of grace, it is necessarily also a book of faith. Grace and faith go hand in hand, for it is faith that lays hold of grace.

Dr. Henri L. Rossier was born in 1835 in French Switzerland. While practicing medicine for over 50 years, he devoted himself to ministering the Word and writing many hymns and commentaries on most of the books of the Bible.



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